

Message Text

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AEC GERMANTOWN

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 17604

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, IT

SUBJECT: ITALY AND THE NPT

REF: IAEA VIENNA 10341

SUMMARY: WE SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CITED REFTTEL IN
REGARD TO HASTENING ITALIAN RATIFICATION OF THE NPT, NOT
ONLY FOR THE RATIONALE CITED THEREIN BUT ALSO BECAUSE ITALIAN
DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS INDICATE THE TIME MAY BE
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RIPE. END SUMMARY.

1. WE AGREE WITH THE ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATION OF REFTEL. RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FONMIN OFFICIAL (COUNSELOR NITTI) RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOI STILL BELIEVES LANGUAGE OF NPT AND SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENTS WOULD PERMIT SAFEGUARDS TO COME INTO FORCE PRIOR TO RATIFICATION AND DEPOSIT OF NPT INSTRUMENTS BY ALL SIGNATORY STATES. HOWEVER, HE SAID, SINCE NOT ALL OF ITALY'S EC PARTNERS CONCUR IN THAT VIEW, ITALY IS PREPARED SERIOUSLY TO DISCUSS MODALITIES OF AN ARTICLE 25 (B) WAIVER. HE INTIMATED THAT DISCUSSIONS ON THAT LINE WOULD SOON TAKE PLACE WITH IAEA.

2. WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE LEGAL ISSUES, EMBASSY WOULD REGRET ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD TEND TO PRESERVE GOI SENSE OF SURETY IN REGARD TO A CONTINUING SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND EXPERTISE WITHOUT BECOMING A FULL PARTY TO THE NPT. WAIVER OF ARTICLE 25 (B) TO BRING THE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT INTO EFFECT WOULD TEND TO HAVE EXACTLY THAT EFFECT, PARTICULARLY IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CLEAR INDICATION TO THE CONTRARY FROM SUPPLIER STATES US AND USSR. WE THEREFORE WOULD CONTINUE TO PREFER, WERE TIME PRIOR TO REVIEW CONFERENCE NOT RUNNING SHORT, TO SEE ARTICLE 25 (B) WAIVER CONCEPT QUASHED, TO TELL GOI THAT WE CONSIDER SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT WILL NOT ENTER INTO FORCE UNTIL ALL AFFECTED STATES, INCLUDING ITALY, ARE PARTIES TO THE NPT, AND TO INDICATE TO GOI, PERHAPS JOINTLY WITH USSR, THAT QTE RULE OF REASON UNQTE ON CONTINUING SUPPLIES OF MATERIAL AND TECHNOLOGY IS WEARING THIN. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PERSUASION, COMBINED WITH FAVORABLE DOMESTIC ITALIAN DEVELOPMENTS CITED BELOW, WOULD PROVIDE MAXIMUM CHANCE OF MOVING GOI TO PROMPT RATIFICATION OF NPT.

3. HOWEVER, FOREGOING COURSE OF ACTION HAS UNFAVORABLE ASPECTS FOR FRG AND BENELUX STATES, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO REVIEW CONFERENCE. WERE GOI TO INTRODUCE NPT IN PARLIAMENT TODAY, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD MOVE WITH RELATIVE RAPIDITY AND LITTLE OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE COMPLICATED PROCESS OF RATIFICATION, THE ODDS ARE THEN THAT IT WOULD APPROVED IN TIME TO PERMIT ITALY AND ITS AFFECTED PARTNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN REVIEW SESSION. THEREFORE, WHILE WE ARE NOT CLEAR ON ALL MODALITIES OF POSSIBLE APPROACH WHICH MIGHT EVOLVE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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FRG (PARA 5, REFTEL), WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD SUPPORT IT IN PRINCIPLE.

4. A SERIES OF RECENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ITALY INDICATES THE MOST PROMISING MOMENT FOR A MOVE ON THE GOI MAY BE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE:

A) OF THE TWO PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN ITALY'S NEW

GOVERNMENT ONE, THE REPUBLICAN, HAS LONG BEEN AN ADVOCATE OF ITALIAN ADHERENCE TO THE NPT. REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADER LA MALFA IS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND ONE OF HIS SENIOR LIEUTENANTS HAS BEEN APPOINTED AN UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE PARTY NEWSPAPER ON DECEMBER 11 CARRIED A FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL CALLING FOR PROMPT ITALIAN NPT RATIFICATION.

B) AT THE SAME TIME IT WAS REVEALED THAT, IN A LETTER (BEING TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY) DATED SEPTEMBER 26, A GROUP OF MORE THAN 140 OF ITALY'S SCIENTIFIC ELITE - PHYSICISTS, NUCLEAR ENGINEERS AND OTHER DISCIPLINES -- HAD ADDRESSED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER A WELL-REASONED PLEA FOR ITALIAN ADHERENCE TO NPT. THE LETTER (WHOSE DELIVERY HAD APPARENTLY BEEN DELAYED UNTIL THE INSTALLATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT) IS LIKELY TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPRESSION ON THE GOI.

C) A BROAD RANGE OF PARLIAMENTARY OPINION APPEARS TO FAVOR PROMPT RATIFICATION OF NPT. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATORS, DESPITE RECENT ARTFUL LANGUAGE (PARA. 5) BY PRIME MINISTER MORO, ARE CONSIDERED GENERALLY FAVORABLE. PARALLELING REPUBLICAN SENTIMENT, INTERPELLATIONS FAVORABLE TO ADHERENCE HAVE BEEN TABLED BY SOCIALISTS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE UNDERLYING REASONS ARE CLEAR, THIS COINCIDENCE OF PARTY VIEWS, INCLUDING COMMUNIST, WITH THOSE OF THE US AND THE USSR COMPRISES A NOVELTY IN ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARY ALIGNMENTS).

5. THE GOI HAS RECEIVED OVER RECENT MONTHS A NUMBER OF DEMARCHES (UK AND FRG) AND QUERIES (NETHERLANDS AND CANADA) ON NPT PROGRESS, AND IS AWARE OF THE SERIOUS SOVIET AND US INTEREST. THIS PROCESS REPORTEDLY IRRITATED THE FOREIGN
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MINISTRY'S TOP PROFESSIONALS (SECRETARY GENERAL GAJA AND DIRECTOR GENERAL DUCCI) WHO ARE COMMONLY CONSIDERED THE CENTER OF RESISTANCE TO NPT. HOWEVER THE DIPLOMATIC QUERIES AND DOMESTIC PRESSURES MAY HAVE SENSITIZED THEIR POLITICAL SUPERIORS TO SOME OF THE UNPLEASANT DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS OF FURTHER FOOT-DRAGGING ON NPT.

6. AT THIS POINT THERE IS SOME DOUBT AS TO WHERE MORO STANDS ON THE ISSUE. IN DEFENDING THE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT BEFORE THE SENATE, THEN FOREIGN MINISTER MORO UNDERTOOK ON BEHALF OF THE GOI TO INTRODUCE THE NPT FOR RATIFICATION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF THE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, HIS MORE RECENT STATEMENTS TO PARLIAMENT AS PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE, PRESENTING AND DEFENDING HIS GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED PROGRAM, HAVE BEEN EQUIVOCAL ON NPT. ON DECEMBER 2, IN QTE CONFIRMING

(ITALY'S) ADHERENCE TO THE NPT UNQTE, HE REFERRED TO THE NECESSITY OF QTE ADJUSTING UNQTE THE TREATY AT THE SPRING REVIEW CONFERENCE TO QTE SAFEGUARD THE PROSPECTS OF A FULL AND PEACEFUL USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY UNQTE. FIVE DAYS LATER, DECEMBER 7, HE AGAIN SPOKE OF REVISING THE TREATY BUT THIS TIME IN THE CONTEST OF CONFIRMING ITALY'S ADHERENCE TO THE QTE PRINCIPLES UNQTE OF THE TREATY. WHATEVER ITS GENESIS, MORO'S APPARENT MISCONCEPTION OF THE MAY, 1975 CONFERENCE AS BEING A QTE REVISION UNQTE RATHER THAN A QTE REVIEW UNQTE SESSION NEEDS CORRECTION.

7. THE EMBASSY, THEREFORE, SUGGESTS THAT CONJUNCTION OF POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAKES IT POSSIBLE AND DESIRABLE TO OUTFLANK GAJA AND DUCCI BY PRESENTING OUR VIEWS WITH FIRMNESS AND CLARITY TO THE POLITICAL LEVEL OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, PERHAPS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FRG APPROACH SHOULD IT INDEED MATERIALIZE. VOLPE

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